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CIA papers say Mengele a drug dealer

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WASHINGTON — Nazi war criminal Josef Mengele has been an international drug dealer protected by the dictator of Paraguay, declassified CIA documents released Tuesday indicate.

Sens. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., and Alfonse D'Amato, R-N.Y., who released the documents, accused the Drug Enforcement Administration of letting drug dealers associated with Mengele escape in 1979 after their arrest.

They identified the dealers as "Becker" and "Morelli."

"We don't know their first names or their nationalities," D'Amato said, but "they walked away because the paperwork was messed up during a transfer." DEA and U.S. Marshals Service officials denied the account.

The 28 pages of documents contain new information about Mengele, the Auschwitz "Angel of Death" charged with murdering 400,000 Jews — and "show that the CIA has not been diligent in pursuing significant leads," Specter said.

The documents contain a 1974 report that Israeli agents beat to death a German soldier in Paraguay who they thought was Mengele, and that Mengele has had plastic surgery.

Meanwhile, another accused Nazi war criminal narrowly escaped being poisoned in his Lyon, France, prison cell. Klaus Barbie, known as the "Butcher of Lyon," was given an acid substance instead of medicine, but he spat it out.